The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

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Old and New.

Uneasy is the world: ever it strains
And worries for things new; these soon are old,
Soon tossed aside, left to the cankering mould
Of absolute indifference: the pains
Of feverish longing rage with power tenfold
For novelty and change, and lives are sold
To vile captivity of tinsel chains.

Have we then passed beyond the knowledge stored
Age upon age by greatest souls of men?
Is the vast splendour of our modern hoard
The antique symbol of a lesser ken?
Nay, truer does the old-time wisdom run
There's nothing new that's underneath the sun.

N. A.

My Creed.

I believe in God the Father, perfect wisdom, perfect light;
I believe in Mother Nature, patient justice, ceaseless right;
I believe in Christ, the Master, victor over pain and wrong,
Rolling down the tide of ages from his cross a triumph song;

I believe the Spirit holy, essence of the pure, the good;
I believe the universal, mighty bond of brotherhood;
I believe that saints and prophets lead us here and wait us there;
I believe that inspiration fills each earnest, heartfelt prayer;

I believe in loyal service, friendship high and worship free;
In the love that lifts the human up to seek Infinity.
I believe that Truth shall conquer, potent, deathless in the strife,
And in God's great, boundless mercy, after this—Immortal Life.

HARRIET BELLE BARTON.

The Soul's Mountain.

A SERMON BY THE REV. A. W. TIMMIS.

LUKE ix. 33.—"And it came to pass as they were parting from him, Peter said unto Jesus, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah: not knowing what he said."

Seeing Moses and Elijah about to depart, Peter conceived the idea of keeping them, and proposed to erect three booths, or tents, there on the mountain. The unspoken thought in his mind we may imagine to have been something like this:—If the Master will only remain for a time where he is, he may give up his intention of going to Jerusalem, and there risking his life in a decisive encounter with the elders and chief priests and scribes. Here he is safe and in good company. Here let him stay. But Jesus himself had other thoughts. He knew that the glory of the Transfiguration, the appearance of Moses and Elijah, and the awful voice out of the cloud were given *on purpose* to strengthen him for that journey to Jerusalem, and keep him faithful to his mission. He could not linger on the mountain, good as it was to be there; for his work awaited him in the valleys and plains below.

This reading between the lines of the story is consistent with what we know of Peter's character and the Master's. But what of the story itself? Is it true? Did the Transfiguration really happen in the fashion described? Candour obliges me to say, rather unwillingly, that I think not. But then, so far as any practical lesson for us is concerned, it makes little or no difference whether

the story be fact or fiction. None of us now expects to see such marvels as the three apostles are said to have witnessed then. Therefore, if we are to get, from the tale told concerning them, any help or guidance, we must be able to compare their alleged experience with some actual or possible experience of our own.

And that we can surely do. Suppose we are incredulous of the wonders shown to Peter, John, and James. Do we not, nevertheless, believe in something more wonderful and better worth believing? God, we may think, does not speak to man in a voice that shakes the air and can be heard with ears of flesh; probably never has so spoken. But He does speak, Spirit to spirit. Attempts have been made to identify the mountain of the Transfiguration. If the thing did not happen, inquiry as to where it took place is vain. But more than once in the Gospels we hear of Jesus going apart by himself among the hills to pray. No doubt he often did so; far oftener than the records mention. This, I doubt not, is fact, though the Transfiguration story be legend. And we, any disciple of his, can follow Jesus up on to the mountain of prayer and devout meditation. He bids us pray to the Father who seeth in secret. He teaches that as surely as human parents give good gifts of daily bread and other things to their children—nay, much more surely and unfailingly—the Father of us all will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. This communion of man with God, always open to those who seek it, is, I affirm, a greater wonder, and vastly better worth believing in, than the miracle of the Transfiguration, which, if it ever happened, we certainly cannot look to have repeated for our benefit. And whenever, in such communion, we rise above the lower cares and aims of earth, our experience is like enough to the alleged experience of the three apostles to admit of profitable comparison with it. We then, as it were, ascend into a mountain above the levels on which our everyday life is spent.

The question is, what is the right use of these ascents of the soul into its mountain? "It is good for us to be here," said Peter. And, though we read that he spoke as one "not knowing what he said," we need not understand that as applying to his first statement, that it was good to be there, but only to his foolish proposal to set up three booths, and stay there. It is good, *we* say, to be lifted out of our common-place surroundings and earthly affairs on some height of thought and aspiration, where we can hold converse with heavenly presences and feel the supreme reality and supreme worth of things unseen and eternal. Yes, but we must not dream of staying always on the mountain. That, were it possible, would not be good; it would be selfish and self-indulgent, a shirking of duty. Not mere feeling, not even the purest and most exalted feeling we are capable of, but action, is the end of life. Where a man can act and be useful, there is the proper place for him most of the time. Though we ought to live *for* things unseen and eternal, we inevitably do live *among* things seen and temporal; and not even in contemplation of the imperishable and the divine is it right to absent ourselves, except for a season, longer or shorter, from the duties that wait for us where our human neighbours dwell, in our appointed place of service and usefulness. He who would follow Jesus must not isolate himself from the common life of mankind upon earth on the plea of holding an uninterrupted communion with heaven. To be spiritually minded, as the Master was, is *not* to retire into ascetic seclusion, and there abide, with thoughts and hopes continually fixed on the other world. It is to take with us among our fellows, on the trodden ways of this familiar earth, a spirit of inward peace and power received from Him who is able to keep us from falling.

The proof that it has been really good for us to be on the mountain? The one proof is that there the best life within us has been nourished and deepened; that our power to be good and do good down on the plain is increased. St. Philip Neri, in the sixteenth century, once applied this test very cleverly. The Pope consulted him about a certain nun in a convent near Rome, who laid claim to extraordinary gifts of inspiration and prophecy. Philip had just come in from a journey. He remounted his mule, and rode forthwith, through mud and mire, to the convent where this prodigy resided. Directly she entered the room, he requested her to pull off his muddy boots. The nun, who had been made much of, angrily refused. Philip, without a moment's delay, rode back to the Pope, and said, "Give yourself no uneasiness, Holy Father,

any longer. Here is no miracle, for here is no humility." Rather harsh judgment on the young lady, it may seem. Not so harsh, however, not too severe, when one recollects that the Roman Church, to which she belonged, has always insisted on the dignity of lowly service. The incident will, at any rate, serve to illustrate the truth that a soul's gains on the mountain are accurately weighed and counted when it comes down and is brought face to face with duty. Is it no richer in such graces as kindness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control? Then it has gained nothing.

Perhaps it occurs to you that a warning against excessive absorption in thoughts of the spiritual world, against spending too much time and energy in religious contemplation, is superfluous. The fault, I might be reminded, is not common; is especially rare among Christians of our way of thinking. How little is the time spent in prayer and other aids to the religious life compared with the time consumed in frivolous and even demoralising pleasures, and in business whereby the busy do not lay up for themselves treasure in heaven or add to the true well-being of anybody on earth. What most people need is not a warning not to give too much time to their devotions, but rather an exhortation to give more, and to let the soul have more frequent opportunities of breathing its native air.

Quite true. Dreams like the one Jacob had at Bethel, and a waking sense of the awful presence of God besetting our path, are not too common. If *we* linger in a pleasant place because it is good to be there, though duty calls for us elsewhere, it is usually not in a high and holy place where God manifests Himself. A comparison happily employed by the Stoic moralist, Epictetus, better fits and describes our case. Epictetus likened the neglect by so many persons of the great aims of life, while occupying themselves with other things, agreeable, it may be, and not to be despised, but less important than what they neglect—this neglect he compared to the behaviour of a man who, journeying homewards, puts up at a comfortable inn, and there stays on and takes his ease, as if to get to the inn had been the purpose of his journey. "Man," one might say, "thou hast forgotten thine object: thy journey was not *to* this, but *through* this." And is it not so with most of us? Not on a mountain, where it is good for us to be because there we feel ourselves near to God and heaven, but in some taking way-side inn, we loiter and forget our duty, "the great and master thing," as Epictetus calls it.

All this is very true. Still what I said before is also true. Beware of taking your ease too long in your inn, however reputable and orderly the house may be, however excellent the entertainment and the company. Most people need that warning. But, neither must the soul stay too long on its mountain, or mistake the being there for the end of life. It is possible, though not so common, to neglect one's duty in this way as thoroughly as in the other. The soul should go up into its mountain, not to stay, but to brace and invigorate itself for manly toil and effort in the busy world below. Even spiritual communion with the unseen and eternal is not to be treated as an end in itself, but as a means to the end of right and useful living.

This approves itself to the reason and common sense of our age. A conception of the Christian religion and its mission in the world, which I will call Christian secularism, is now spreading among the various denominations. How often we hear something like this said—that the mission of Christainity is not merely to save immortal souls for the hereafter, but to save men's bodies and minds here from poverty, misery, disease, ignorance, and vice. Christians are not to forget that they are also citizens. Is their "citizenship in heaven?" Let them prove it by bringing down thence, to reign on earth, some of the justice and mercy, love and peace and goodwill, that make the blessedness of heaven; for if any man's religion does not help him to be a better citizen of the earthly commonwealth of which he is a member, that man's religion is vain. Wherever, by whatever means, the health and happiness of the body politic, the social organism, can be promoted, and human lives be lifted, refined, brightened—*there* is Christian work waiting to be done; work in which Christians, as such, are imperatively called upon to take an earnest and active interest. The division of things, affairs, and occupations into the two classes sacred and secular, religious and worldly, is based on a false and mischievous distinction not sanctioned either by the teaching or by the example of Christ, condemned by

both. All human things, affairs, occupations, are to be conquered and consecrated by the Christian spirit, that the kingdom of God may come. Thus Christian secularism summons Christianity to come down from the mountain and mingle freely and beneficently with the world's life.

Some prefer a secularism without Christianity, without any tincture of theistic belief. It is a waste of time and strength, they say, to concern one's self at all with another world and a future life. I think that their secularism will not stand the test either of practical utility or of reason. With regard to practical utility and effectiveness, there are noble exceptions—let us be generous, and say there are many noble exceptions—but the rule is that they who do not believe in another world will have little heart to work for the improvement of this. They have not enough love of man, or enough faith in human nature, or enough hope for the future of mankind, to inspire them to a life of self-denying service. And as to the test of reason, of speculative truth, there is that in man which secularism pure and simple cannot satisfy. The human mind and heart together will always discover grounds for believing what secularism denies or doubts.

Christian secularism holds to all that is positive and true in the rival creed; and for this it perhaps owes the latter a debt of gratitude. But Christian secularism has in addition the inspiration and power of faith in the Living God. Let it, then, do, and do better than its rival, the work of improving this world, of promoting the goodness and happiness of mankind here on earth. That will be the most effective refutation of the secularism which discards religion.

That sense of obligation to mutual love and helpfulness which Paul sought to kindle in Christians of his day by exhorting them to think of themselves as being collectively "one body in Christ, and severally members one of another," Christian secularism now seeks to awaken by insisting on the truth that as fellow citizens we are all members of the same political and social organism. To the growth and diffusion in our midst of such a spirit of human brotherhood we may look with hope for the breaking down of the barriers between the sects. Praying and working together for the coming of the kingdom, men will learn that they are nearer to each other than they imagined in their deepest faiths, and will be brought nearer still. Christianity—not any of the orthodoxies, but the religion of Jesus—will spread, not only in the churches, but among those who are now outside all the churches. And so a time may come when a national profession of Christianity, if the English people choose to make it, will be not so false and hollow as it would be at present.

But let me cease from prophesying, and speak, in conclusion, of things as they are. We shrink with a strong and deep repugnance from the secularism which bids us do without God and without the sublime hopes warranted by faith in God, the Father Almighty. The shrinking is natural and reasonable. Persons, however, who think and feel thus—when they think at all on the problems of human duty and destiny—are liable to be overcome by a practical secularism which is worse than the theoretical. Immeasurably worse; for *it* can never be, as theoretical secularism sometimes is, joined to a dutiful and noble life. Another, and perhaps the best, name for this practical secularism is worldliness. Under its sway persons who believe—or at least believe that they believe—in God, duty, and immortality, habitually live as if all three were not realities, but dreams. And who among us is not sometimes dominated by worldliness?

What is the remedy? I think the remedy, the only one, is that the soul know well, by dint of frequent use, the way to its mountain, and there be convinced again and again—for one demonstration will not suffice—that the objects of its professed faith are not dreams, but the most real of realities. It may go alone, as Jesus often went; or it may be one of a company, as when the Master took the three favoured apostles with him. We may seek the Divine Presence either individually, in solitude, alone with the Alone; or socially, whether with a few intimates, or in the family circle, or in the public worship for which churches and chapels are built.

If we are to compare and choose, I am persuaded that private worship is of far the more vital importance. One can, if need be, do without public worship. But public without private worship will not avail much. It will hardly be the worship in spirit and in truth whereby alone

man is helped and inspired, and which alone is acceptable to God. And this fact is notable: nowhere in the Gospels does Jesus urge his hearers to attend temple or synagogue, while he repeatedly exhorts them to private prayer. On the other hand, Luke tells us incidentally that it was Jesus' custom (iv. 16) to go to the synagogue at Nazareth on the Sabbath day: so that his example, if not his precept, can be cited in favour of public worship.

A minister of religion recommending public worship may be suspected of professional bias and self-interest. It is so obviously to the advantage and comfort of ministers that their congregations should be large and flourishing. But no honest man, allow me to say, would undertake, or, having undertaken, would continue, the work of conducting public worship, unless he held it to be, when rightly used, a veritable means of grace. So, if that suspicion has intruded itself, put it away, and think what public worship might be and do for us.

We, I assume, have no superstitions on the subject. We do not acknowledge any divinely ordained ritual in the mere observance of which we can imagine ourselves to be obeying a positive command from heaven. Though we call our meetings here services, we know that they are rather preparations for the "divine service," truly so called, which consists in the active doing of God's will by personal faithfulness and in being useful to our brethren, His children. But, is it a small privilege, should it be no help in our endeavours after the Christian life, to seek the Father's face in company with one another, and in a place hallowed by the contrite prayers and joyful thanksgivings, the humble confessions and heavenward aspirations of many worshipping souls? This is to some of you literally "the venerable house your fathers built to God." Hither you were brought as children by those whose guiding hands and dear voices are no longer with you, but who are, it may be, neither ignorant nor careless of your doing and faring. To me this building cannot be just what it is to you who have such memories connected with it. Yet I have learnt to love it and to feel the spell of its associations. What, therefore, shall I say, wishing to speak only words of sober truth? I will say that here, if we but come in the right spirit, the spirit of the place, we shall find this to be indeed the house of God, and not far from the gate of heaven, and shall be drawn into the communion of saints. And when we come down from the mountain, there will be no need to tell, much less to boast, of where we have been, and what we have seen and felt. It will be manifest in our daily walk on earth's common ways. It will appear in our bearing one towards another, in our faithful and gracious performance of simple duties, in our eagerness to do good; in our willingness and our power, if honoured with a call to great self-sacrifice, to follow the Master even along the way of the cross. For all these things we may here be made sufficient by a strength greater than our own. Is it not, then, "good for us to be here?"

Intensity.

The present age is characterised by intensity. Civilisation, instead of calming our spirits, stimulates them into great activity. Business, pleasure, the learned professions, literature, and all the arts of life, bear witness to our hurried earnestness. We bend the bow to the breaking point. Our hearts pant because of the rapidity of the race. This intensity of life has its first and deepest cause in our spiritual wants, in the thirst and hunger of the soul. When evening is come, and the child is tired, he desires this thing, then another, after that some other toy; and having received them all, he weeps for something else. But it is rest and sleep that he wants rather than the toys for which he sheds so many tears. So of men; there is an inquietude in their minds, the cause of which they do not understand. They suppose that if they could possess riches, or command the pleasures of the world, or obtain the knowledge, the office, the social position, or the fame for which they long, all would be well with them. But they are in error, for their restlessness has its origin in their spiritual instincts. It is "the peace which passeth understanding," the rest which is found in God alone, that they need, although they know it not. Let this encourage the preacher to declare his message of love. Let his preaching be according to the truth, and in the spirit of these words, and he shall not speak in vain: "Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest."

The Minister's Critics.

I was seated in a railway-carriage not long ago, when two of my fellow-travellers commenced a conversation on the ministers of the district through which we were passing. They had entered at the last station, and were evidently full of their subject; they spoke without reserve, and in a tone so loud that I could not help hearing. There was the most comfortable self-satisfaction in their criticisms; they discovered faults of manner in one preacher, faults of education in another, excellencies in a third, and weighed each man with a confident nicety, as if they knew his worth within half-an-ounce. Probably every neighbourhood has its critics as exacting and as superficial. There was intelligence in their remarks, but no sympathy, and therefore only a narrow judgment. They set me thinking, as we rolled along, of the seventy-five thousand sermons which, according to Dean Ramsay, are preached every Sunday in Great Britain (nearly four millions during the year), and of the curious diversities of criticism with which they are received.

There is the criticism which judges all preachers by one standard of mind, and is never satisfied unless it finds the highest ability. It can be serenely scornful in its condemnation, and has no mercy upon mediocrity—witness the letters it sends to the *Times* every autumn. It expects all ministers to be of one stature and of equal strength, though every Philistine is not a Goliath, neither can every captain of the chosen people be a Saul among the brethren, or a David with invincible sling.

There is the criticism which judges all preachers by one man, substituting for an intellectual ideal some familiar embodiment of excellence. All honour to the power of a faithful minister by which he lives in the hearts of his people; there is no bond of union more worthy of respect. A true man will be always the first to condemn any comparison with himself by which another suffers, yet there is no habit more common than this prejudiced criticism. I have known a stranger enter the pulpit, and preach an excellent sermon, nothing wanting in all essential qualities, and yet seen many in the congregation restless under the unaccustomed voice, and listeners usually attentive turning to look at the clock. There are people, too, who are "wrapped up" in their minister with an indiscriminate affection that narrows the mind and takes the manhood out of their piety. There are others who recall the days when they sat under some great luminary, whose light shone into the darkest corners of their hearts with an overwhelming radiance, and now it seems as if the glory had departed, and the skies would never brighten again. Ah, well, it is worth the thankfulness of a life-time to have heard some few words of penetrating wisdom, and to have felt the quickening throb of that divine life which a master-spirit inspires. But it is a base and pitiful use of past privileges to go about carping at the stars because the sun has set, and to refuse the serviceable earthly lights that common hands may kindle. The prophets die, but the truth of God lives. Opportunities vary, but it is the proof of a wise ministry that it teaches us to profit in adverse circumstances, and to use the lesser opportunities of life as well as the greater.

There is the criticism that judges all preachers by one style. Many hearers—and may their number multiply!—like a "scriptural" sermon, though sometimes their ideas of what *is* scriptural are very superficial; or they like, as we all should, what is devotional and ethical; but why do some of them speak so disparagingly of "intellectual" preaching? There is, indeed, a cold intellectualism that has more of human pride in it than of Divine wisdom, but let them not forget that God designs to satisfy our whole nature, that mind and heart alike may rest in Him. There are great heights of truth to which only the strong intellect can climb—awful depths into which it alone may look down; and it is well if this strong travelled intellect can make us feel on our common level that there *are* things to which we have not yet reached. Other people have an open ear for argument, in which they exercise their ingenuity to find a flaw; or, give them a subtle metaphysician, and they are content. Some prefer what is "practical"—religion in common life, and are intolerant of doctrine. Many sneer at all poetry as "flowery"—unable to distinguish between the artificial flowers of borrowed language, strung for mere ornament's sake, and the fresh natural growth of

a poet mind. Others, again, are delighted when some strong appeal bows down their attention, or an earnest rhetoric stirs their feeling, but cannot appreciate the perfect culture and the exact thought which are often expressed in quiet simplicity. Frederick Robertson never spoke more wisely than when he urged young men to "cultivate catholic tastes." There are diversities of gifts suited to all the varieties of spiritual need; let us welcome them all, without undue depreciation of any. Let us have many styles in the pulpit—a greater freedom, I for one would say, than as yet rules; but let all styles be good, each in its kind. There are many forests, and many trees, and grasses that no man can number, and many-coloured flowers in richly various beauty; but when the wind of God blows, what music among all the branches! how gracefully the slender stalks bow at its touch everywhere over the fields! and how sweet the fragrance dispersed in the air! And when the sun shines, does not God look down and still pronounce everything that he has made "very good?" Oh, for some such Divine blast sweeping through the manifold life of the Church!

Again, there is the criticism which judges always by the same external conditions, and which expects a man always to be at his best. It takes no account of physical depression; of the shades of feeling that must sometimes darken the mind; of the sense of weakness under which, like other men, a preacher must often bend; of the temptations with which he must strive; of the toilsome work with which he wearies. Such critics are prompt with their disparagements, and decisive in all circumstances alike. One likes to think, however, of sermons that have been preached—and with powerful effect—under great disadvantages; of Edward Irving, for example, standing up with the pale sweat of the cholera still upon him, or of "Theophilus Trinal" discoursing calmly with the death-grip at his heart.

In conclusion, there is a criticism which sees with clear eyes and speaks with clear words, which does not say "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," but has a kindly heart for all God's servants. We cannot have too much of this criticism—it purifies, it elevates, it teaches. The pulpit need never be afraid of it. On the contrary, a strong preacher, skilful to divide the word of life, and anxious only for the truth, will delight in a discerning audience. And I am persuaded—this was the result of my moralising in that railway carriage, and prompted me to write the present paper—that ministers are as much hindered by the false criticisms of their hearers, as they might be helped by a truer judgment. I cannot accept on their behalf, pious George Herbert's consolation—

"If all want sense,
God takes a text, and preacheth patience."

We laymen are honestly of opinion that the pulpit often fails, and might attain a higher standard.

Dr. Bushnell somewhere speaks of "preaching with the preacher." The Churches want more of this preaching. If the people glow with devotion, the preacher feels the influence and speaks with holier fervour. If they are open-minded, eager to be taught, and ready to apply the truth, he will have peculiar zest in his preparation for the pulpit, and a pleasure in preaching that will act as a spiritual tonic. If *they* think, *he* will be thoughtful. A coldly critical temper is like a frost upon the pulpit; a genial sympathy is like the south wind that makes the streams flow and the birds sing. Looking at the spiritual aspects of the subject, John Foster, in one of his essays, alludes to the many causes operating injuriously through the week on the characters of those who form a congregation, and the invading melancholy felt by a thoughtful man in his addresses "from the reflection that he is making a feeble effort against a powerful evil, a single effort against a combination of evils, a temporary and transient effort against evils of almost continual operation, and a purely intellectual effort against evils, many of which act on the senses." Such a thought should change our criticisms into prayers.

A LAYMAN.

The Mount of Beatitudes.

High on the loved hill-side the Master stood,
Light from the Father overspread the place,
And virginal soft airs did kiss the face
Of him who was the world's Beatitude.

And ever as I tread a mountain's crest,
And drink its healing plenitude of air,
I catch a memory of the Master there,
And gather whispers of the voice that blessed.

AMBROSE BENNETT.

Ruskin's "Seven Lamps of Architecture" considered as Parables.

II.—The Lamp of Truth.

The word "Truth" is a word of several shades of meaning. In the first place it stands for veracity, personal truthfulness, sincerity, as when we say that this man or that is a man of his word. Truth of speech, truth of work, truth and conduct—veracity.

In the second place, we use the word truth in the sense of loyalty, as when we say that a man is true to his friends, or true to his country, or true to his party. A disloyal man is a man we can no longer trust; he has forfeited all title to our confidence by his want of truth.

Thirdly, we mean by truth a certain doctrine or body of doctrine about the reality of things. In this connection we speak of "the truth," and a truthful man is one who is anxious to find out the true relations of things, and how he really stands to the universe, and what ideas and convictions are in accord with the eternal verities. He is a truth-seeker.

On each of these aspects of Truth much is to be said. Fundamentally, the first of these aspects is the most important, *i.e.*, Truth as Veracity, and it is this view of the subject Ruskin illustrates in the second of his Seven Lamps of Architecture—"The Lamp of Truth," for on this the other aspects of truth depend for their strength and vitality. Without truthfulness of soul and speech and character, who would expect loyalty to friendship and country? Or what trustworthy conclusion can come of truth-seeking if the seeker himself be not a sincere man? Personal veracity is fundamental.

We have seen how by architecture Ruskin means much more than mere building, as there may be and is much building of houses, fortresses, factories, railway stations, and so forth, without the least tincture of Architecture. Architecture means the expression of men's thoughts and feelings upon buildings with a view to the pleasure they may give as works of beauty,—in other words, as objects of art. Such thoughts and feelings are especially seen in sacred buildings, for it is upon them that the greatest care and most significant symbolisms have been lavished. So the first intention in building a house for God and a place for prayer was that it should be a form of sacrifice: it involved giving the best work and the costliest material as an expression of man's love and reverence. The sacrifice, therefore, was not painful, but a deep delight, as are all the sacrifices prompted by love. Next, the Sincerity of worship which sacred architecture is meant to illustrate is reflected in its truth, refusing all architectural deceits in structure, in material, or in ornamentation. And this, in turn, becomes a parable of that sincerity of soul and speech and life which we call veracity.

Following Ruskin's order, we have to notice that veracity is not at all an easy thing, but one of the most difficult virtues to win or habits to attain. Yet, want of truth is the most fatal of all weaknesses. We do not enough consider the deathly and grievous mischief of what are called *slight* deviations from truth. Says our prophet—

> We are too much in the habit of looking at falsehood in its darkest associations, and through the colour of its worst purposes. That indignation which we profess to feel at deceit absolute, is indeed only at deceit malicious. We resent calumny, hypocrisy, and treachery, because they harm us, not because they are untrue. Take the detraction and the mischief from the untrue, and we are little offended by it; turn it into praise and we may be pleased with it. And yet it is not calumny nor treachery that do the largest sum of mischief in the world; they are continually crushed, and are felt only in being conquered. But it is the glistening and softly spoken lie, the amiable fallacy, the patriotic lie of the historian, the provident lie of the politician, the zealous lie of the partizan, the merciful lie of the friend, and the careless lie of each man to himself, that cast that black mystery over humanity, through which we thank any man who pierces, as we would thank one who dug a well in a desert; happy that the thirst for truth still remains with us, even when we have left, wilfully left, the fountains of it.

It is not the consequences of a lie which make it an offence; it is its own falsity. There are pleasant, interesting lies, which seem to do no harm to anybody, nor do they, except to the makers of them, and the harm they do to them is irreparable, since they induce a habit of falsehood which slowly rots the whole nature. It is well to quit all nice measurement of white lies and trivial deceits, small prevarications and allowable conventions, since they are sins against our own souls—

> Do not let us lie at all. Do not think of one falsity as harmless, and another as slight, and another as unin-

tended. Cast them all aside, they may be light and accidental, but they are an ugly soot from the smoke of the pit for all that, and it is better that our hearts should be swept clean of them, without over care as to which is largest or blackest. Speaking truth is like writing fair, and comes only by practice; it is less a matter of will than of habit, and I doubt if any occasion can be trivial which permits the practice and formation of such a habit. To speak and to act truth with constancy and precision is nearly as difficult, and perhaps as meritorious, as to speak it under intimidation or penalty, and it is a strange thought how many men there are, as I trust, who would hold to it at the cost of fortune or life, for one who would hold to it at the cost of a little daily trouble. And seeing that of all sin there is, perhaps, no one more flatly opposite to the Almighty, no one more "wanting the good of virtue and of being," than this of lying; it is surely a strange insolence to fall into the fulness of it on light or on no temptation, and surely becoming an honourable man to resolve that whatever semblances or fallacies the necessary course of his life may compel him to bear or to believe, none shall disturb the serenity of his voluntary actions, nor diminish the reality of his chosen delights.

He who would always act and speak with truth will find it about the toughest task a man can set himself. Never by word, or look, or gesture, or action, or silence to convey a false impression; so to measure our words, speaking with such accuracy that none shall be led astray; to shun exaggeration, to keep a watch upon our tongues in the heat of temper, to repeat no scandal, to countenance no shams, to hate all cant, veneer, seeming, posturing, and pretence as the very devil,—this is not easy. It is, in fact, so difficult that Carlyle makes it the touchstone of all heroism. "The hero," he says, "means the sincere man." If so, why may not each one of us be a hero? A world all sincere,—what a happy world that would be, and how different from the world as it is. To fight against lies, and cant, and affectation, what more desperate battle was ever waged upon earth?

We need not dwell long on Ruskin's illustrations from Architecture of the vileness of a lie. He mentions the habit of stuccoing honest brickwork, not to condemn the equally honest stucco when it simply stands for what it is, but when it is smoothed and divided by lines, and shows joints, to look like blocks of stone. There is then that which is meant to deceive, the lie gross and palpable. Or look at the way people marble their modern doorways, not letting the honest paint stand for what it is, nor the honest grain of the wood show itself under polish, but using paint to imitate another material that the beholder may be deceived. Or look in many a cheap, wooden church, how we suffer the decorator to paint pediments, and pillars, and caricatures of columns, although, says Ruskin, "I cannot but believe that there are many to whom, as to myself, such things are serious obstacles to repose of mind and temper which should precede devotional exercises." They do, also, infinite harm to the general tone of our judgment and feeling, for we learn to think lightly of little hypocrisies, meannesses, and deceits when we suffer the house of God to be tricked out in a fashion so fictitious and unseemly.

While there are many things to be said on this subject, two must now suffice.

Truth is a duty we owe first to ourselves. It is an elementary personal obligation. Kant was right when he regarded lying as a forfeiture of personal worth and dignity. Charles Kingsley was right when he regarded it as the only vice to which he could not be tolerant. Our first duty to ourselves requires truth in the inward parts, for truthfulness is that self-consistency of character which makes of it a strong whole. What a flaw is to steel, what a foreign substance is in any texture, that is falsehood to the character. The obligation of inward sincerity should be enough to put us on our guard against conventional lies. Social lies, trivial lies, common deceptions, easy falsehoods, which without malice or injurious intent, may be practised for the sake of convenience. Though they may do no harm to others they impair the fineness of the soul's power of perception, they make us less sensitive, *they thicken the skin!* Almost without our knowing it they rub off the bloom of beauty from character, and sap its foundations. Again, no one can long wear a habit of affectation before others except at the cost of his own integrity. One cannot labour to *seem* to others more than he is without at last cheating himself into a false belief about himself. Through constant studying to appear other than he is, he makes himself at last an artificial man through and through. "Paint me, warts and all," said Oliver Cromwell. Let this habit of untruthfulness in little social things and daily affectations of manner—not being the thing one seems to be—continue, and character will at last be worm eaten with insincerity. Still worse, one con-

scious self-deception, one inward falsehood which is loved, and not resolutely cast out, may prove evil and efficacious enough to spoil the entire wholesomeness of an otherwise beautiful soul. It destroys the inward eye of truth.

Secondly, truth is a duty we owe to society. It is the indispensable bond of social life. Men can be members one of another in a social organism only, as they live together in truth. Society would fall to pieces in a day could no man trust his brother man. The liar is rightly regarded as an enemy to mankind. A lie is not only an affront to the person against whom it is told, it is an offence against humanity. A lying spirit pervading a nation is a sign of rapidly-approaching social dissolution. When Rome fell, nobody could be believed, no one's word could be trusted. Von Moltke could not have so quickly conquered France had the way for his armies not been prepared by the civil and military falsehood which had corrupted the Napoleonic dynasty. A false dream of glory, a false confidence, falsehood in accounts, falsehood in stores, falsehood in military equipment, were the fatal enemies to which Napoleonic France had already succumbed before ever the foreign hosts had reached its capital.

And how much might be said of truthfulness in work. For scamped and sham work is not only personal negligence, it is a social offence. Truthfulness is required in the arm of the day labourer, in the hand of the mechanic, in the finger of the artist, in the brain of the thinker, and the imagination of the poet. An offence is committed against humanity, not only by every adulteration of food, by the substitution of glue for honest nails, but by the combination of colours in a picture which Nature would not tolerate, by false sentiment in novels, false sentiment on the stage—these, and a multitude of their like, would be enough to wreck society if not checked and beaten back continually by a public sense of truth and righteousness. I know not a more urgent ethical need of our times than a revival of truthfulness in work. Social life calls for sincerity, the sincerity of honest workmen, who toil, in Milton's words—

"As ever in my great Taskmaster's eye."

What is wanted is the sincerity of men who go to their work, whether it be sweeping a room, or building a ship, or writing a poem, or repairing a sewer, with something of the religious feeling of the old cathedral builders in what we are pleased to call the dark ages, who carved with careful truth the farthest statues on the highest pinnacles of Gothic churches, and were as painstaking in the tracery of leaf and flower along the upper and scarce visible arches and lines of their great forests in stone as they were in the ornamentation of that which every passer by must note. Civilisation needs salvation from sham work, sham thought, sham service, sham literature, sham orthodoxy, sham heresy.

There is a fine line of Chaucer's I would impress upon you—

"Truth to thine own heart thy soul shall save."

Yes, for he who is true to his own heart, true in every fibre of his being to himself, will not fear the gaze of the searcher of hearts when He shall bring all secrets to light. "In Him is no darkness at all," and the law of inward truth whereby we are like Him requires us to become clear as noon-day to ourselves. How else could we be his disciples, who was the King of truth? Would you be like Christ? Be true. He never swerved. He was a martyr to truth. And he it was who said, "The truth shall make you free."

JOSEPH WOOD.

Does Heaven Speak?

"*The Master said—Does Heaven speak, the four seasons pursue their courses, and all things are continually being produced, but does Heaven say anything?*"

The Master sate among his fond disciples,
Sate motionless and meek;
And when they bade him speak to them he answered—
"Does Heaven speak?"

"The seasons four pursue their course unresting,
And night succeedeth day,
And all things are continually produced;
But what does Heaven say?"

Our life is vexed with profitless wild clamour,
With empty shout and shriek:
We need to ponder o'er the Master's question
"Does Heaven speak?"

C. PIKE.

Manchester College (Oxford) Letter.

MAY.

The London *Daily Chronicle* has added to its already crowded columns a paragraph entitled "Oxford Notes." The following quotation from its issue of May 5th is of interest:—"Is Oxford, legitimately speaking, a seat of learning—or has this title become merely euphemistic? To a casual observer the 'Varsity presents the appearance of a great pleasure ground, with an occasional sign of industry, men in cap and gown hurrying out of sight. Behind the scenes one is none the less impressed with the curious balance of matters; and it has become a truism among undergraduates that 'you don't come to Oxford to work.' Social demands rob most men of their leisure for study As a rule, a man has little more than the forenoon hours for his reading, and these are in great part taken up with lectures. No one works in the afternoon, and custom varies considerably as to the disposal of the remaining time. The corridors and recesses of the Bodleian Library are quite unknown to many undergraduates, being apparently given over to the older representatives of the 'Varsity."

We are "supplying" at Newbury this term, and are glad of the opportunity it offers us of practical work. The advantages of our residence in Oxford have been so emphasised in these letters that one serious disadvantage should not be passed over. I refer to the scarcity of active ministerial work that is here afforded us. Our "supplies" for this Session '95-'96—I am not speaking of vacation engagements—will not have averaged at its close two Sunday engagements each. Surely this is regrettable! And it is undoubtedly an evil. We know, of course, that we are badly located for "supply" purposes—but if we are cut off from the North, surely the Midlands and London are within reasonable distance. We believe our Principal has done his best to make ministers and congregations realise this, but without success. But are they aware—to put the matter colloquially and strongly—that they are cutting their own throats? Elocution lessons are useful, we know—and we are grateful for the added advantages in this direction recently accorded us—but we have lessons to learn which academical instruction neither in elocution nor ought else can give—and for these the ampler, more vital and less artificial atmosphere of the world and life is needed.

Our Sunday School, of which I spoke in the previous letter, is progressing. It has received the name of the "Children's Mission." One of our American students started the movement. I believe he went, in the first instance, into "the streets and lanes of the city," and "compelled" the children to come in. The success of the school, so far, is mainly due to him and to the efforts of several members of our congregation, who have worked most energetically. Several of us assist in the teaching, A small house has just been rented, which it is hoped may be used on week-days as well as on Sundays. Mr. Stead's penny "Books for the Bairns," "Æsop's Fables," and the "Tales and Wonders of Jesus"—the latter marred for children's purposes by an unfortunate preface—have proved useful in the teaching. They are peculiarly valuable for their numerous illustrations. Mr. Stead's advice is good in his preface to the "Fables." "Parents and teachers who read these fables aloud to their children will find it useful, after reading several stories, to double the page over, so that only the pictures are seen, and ask their hearers to describe the story with the aid of the picture."

At Mr. Carpenter's Sunday "At Homes" we have already heard Mr. W. A. S. Hewins, M.A.—our Sociology Lecturer—on the "Economic Function of the Ministry." Mr. Bernard Bosanquet, M A., was present. We understand that he is to succeed Mr. Hewins as Dunkin Lecturer next Session. If so, he promises to set before us the Economic Problem, particularly in its philosophical aspects. Mr. Lionel Smith has already treated the Problem for us on the purely scientific plane. Mr. Hewins added moral enthusiasm and a distinctly individual point of view. And now we hope to see things through a philosopher's eyes.

Mr. Graham Wallas, M.A., is reading a paper on the 31st May on the "Education Bill," which is likely to prove of interest at this critical period.

M. Jean Réville, Professor of the "Ecole des hautes études" of Paris, gave us two lectures this term, in French, on "The Beginning of the Roman Episcopate." Our large lecture room was full on both occasions. Among other "notables" present were the Vice-Chancellor of the University, Principal Rhys of Jesus, Professors Dicey, Wallace, Tylor, and Gardner, Dr. Fairbairn, Dr. Neubaer, Dr. Murray, etc., and many others.

At our Shakespeare meeting this term we read the "Winter's Tale." The usual festivities followed. At our debate Mr. Johnson moved "That machinery, under our present system, is rather a curse than a blessing." A very animated discussion followed. The motion—ça va sans dire—was lost. Our special preachers this term are Rev. Silas Farrington and Dr. Beaumont Klein. We congratulate Mr. Evans—one of our "enternal" students—on his gaining a History Exhibition of £50 a year at Jesus College.

Just outside Oxford is the little village of Iffley, chiefly known for its parish church, which contains some excellent examples of Norman architecture. Several of us visited the church the other day. There is a beautiful inscription in the porch. I do not know if it is common to many churches.

"ON YOUR WAY

to the Lord's House be thoughtful, be silent, or say but little and that little good. Speak not of other men's faults, think of your own, for you are going to ask forgiveness.

WHEN YOU REACH THE CHURCH

never stay outside, go in at once. Time spent within is exceeding precious.

IN CHURCH

kneel down at once very humbly and pray. Spend the time that remains in holy thought. In prayer remember the awful Presence into which you have come. Never look about you to see who are coming in or for any cause whatever. It matters nothing to you what others may be doing; attend to yourself. Fasten your thoughts firmly on the Holy Service. Miss not one word; this needs a severe struggle, so you have no time for vain things.

The Blessed Spirit will strengthen you if you persevere.

WHEN SERVICE IS OVER

remain kneeling and pray. Be silent and speak to no one until you are outside. The church is God's House even when prayer is over.

ON YOUR WAY HOME

be careful of your talk, the world will too soon slip back into your mind. Love Prayer and Praise best. Preaching is but the help to the heavenly words."

Notes of Sunday School Lessons.

BIRD PARABLES.

"BEHOLD THE FOWLS OF THE AIR."

(Read Deut. xxii. 6, 7; Job xxxix. 26-30; Psa. lv. 6; Psa. lxxxiv. 3; Sol. Song, ii. 11, 12; Isaiah xxxviii. 14; Mat. x. 39; Luke xii. 24; Mat. xxiii. 37.)

The Bible full of birds—like Palestine, a country swarming with birds. The Bittern, Crane, Cuckoo, Dove, Cormorant, Eagle, Hawk, Heron, Kite, Lapwing, Osprey, Ostrich, Owl, Partridge, Peacock, Pelican, Quail, Raven, Sparrow, Stork, Swallow, Swan, Vulture—these and others are mentioned in the Bible. Notice how Christ watched the birds, their ways and habits, and drew parables from them—how he had an eye for the common, simple, everyday things of nature and life, vineyards and cornfields, shepherds and ploughmen, travellers and fishermen, flowers and birds. There is in the *homeliness* of his teaching that which links it with daily life. Point out that God's Providence extends to the birds—"not *one* of them is forgotten before God," said Jesus. It is God who feeds them and clothes them with their beautiful feathers, and gives them wings—those marvellous contrivances for locomotion. It is He who teaches them their sweet songs. To care for birds we may even say is to worship God. (See Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner).

> He prayeth well who loveth well
> Both man and bird and beast.
> He prayeth best who loveth best
> All things both great and small.
> For the dear God that loveth us,
> He made and loveth all.

Point out the cruelty of bird-netting, and of caging such birds as the Thrush and the Lark. Shew how the instinct of love is seen in the mother-bird's care for her young. Notice the varied uses of the wings—for flight—for warmth—to shelter and protect the young from danger. Notice the instinct which leads swallows, swifts, and all the migratory birds to come here from far lands at the approach of Spring. Draw out the lesson that if God does all this for such insignificant creatures how much more may we trust Him to love us and do what is wise and best for us.

The Pleasures of Sickness.

The joys of health—rude, roistering, self-sufficient health—have been amply said and sung. But why has no one proclaimed the delights of sickness? And sickness surely has charms. That it has also ills is such a trite and obvious fact that we scorn to emphasise it at present. But, on the other hand, how fine is the absolute freedom from life's ordinary cares and responsibilities! The burden of daily duties, that is wont to fit so close to the back, is lifted clear off. Whether sales are made, whether editorials are written, whether the children learn their lessons—all this is nothing to you now. You lie in royal idleness. Your mind may roam through all sorts of fancies, you may dream by the hour together, building palaces and landscapes, and fancying wonderful achievements to be easily wrought when health returns. It is a great thing to have the succession of responsibilities and cares that each day bequeaths to its successor so completely broken. The mind is taken out of harness, and turned out to pasture.

Then, how sickness brings out kindness toward one! Friends reveal themselves where before we knew only acquaintances. Kindly inquiries, and offers of help, and all manner of little attentions and neighbourly offices tell in what an atmosphere of good-will we are living. But above all, what household ministrations are bestowed on the sick one! Regard for his comfort becomes the ruling power of the family. Children willingly hush their glee and racket, or carry it elsewhere. Servants, gladly meeting the extra labours, show themselves more friends than servants. One and another study how to show their sympathy, by little offerings of fruit and flower, by watching beside the invalid, and reading aloud to him. And how those who at all times live for his happiness, at such times become radiant with the tenderness of solicitous and ministering love! What child but remembers how mother was never so much mother as when he was sick? Who has not taken new lessons in the spirit that fills the life of a good woman, as he was cared for by a sister or a wife, through wearying days of illness?

Sickness, too, by very force of its privations, gives a new delight to the old every-day enjoy-

ments as they return. You have lain for days in a darkened room; at last you can bear to have a blind thrown back. How the little picture it reveals, just a few trees and a bit of grass, fills and gratifies your sight! And when first you slowly walk or ride a little way in the open air, nature seems to have put on new garments. Rather you are in a sense newly-created, and the world is an Eden again about you.

Among a people who habitually overwork themselves, as we do, a real fit of sickness is often a blessing in disguise. It says *stop*, and its voice is obeyed. It holds one a prisoner while a work is wrought in him, the injury of which may be more than balanced by the enforced leisure, the strength which repose lays up for a new start. It is never welcome, it is dreaded and striven against; yet often it brings blessings even by its side, and leaves a rich legacy behind.

Litany for Children.

Holy Father, throned on high,
Throned afar, yet ever nigh,
Hear us when to thee we cry,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

Love thou art, thou lovest all,
Great thy love for great and small,
Children unto thee may call,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

Feel we now thy Presence near,
Speak, for we thy servants hear,
If to thee we speak with fear,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

That which now doth thee offend,
Thought or habit, aim or end,
That full soon may we amend,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

That which thou dost here instil,
Written Word or spoken Will,
That may we in deed fulfil,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

In his voice thy truth discern,
From his work thy purpose learn,
To his steps for guidance turn,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

Who, with early gladness crowned,
In his Father's house was found
'Mid the doctors seated round,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

Who, with later sorrow weighed,
Into wicked hands betrayed,
Still thy courts his refuge made,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

Who hath taught us how to pray,
How to walk from day to day,
How to thread the narrow way,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

As in age and stature, so
In his wisdom may we grow,
And thy fuller favour know,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

Help us, tempted, to be pure,
And, corrected, to endure,
Of thy help and comfort sure,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

Make us merciful and kind,
Slow, a little hurt to mind,
Quick, another's pain to find,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

Teach us now, in youthful prime,
Duty's path at once to climb,
Ready to redeem the time,
Hear us, we beseech thee.

King of kings, to thee we bow,
Children of thy kingdom now,
All unworthy, but do thou
Hear us, we beseech thee. AMEN.

[The above Litany is contained in "An Order of Service for Children," by Rev. E. P. Barrow, of Cross Street Chapel, Manchester. The Litany is already published separately, on cards, at 3s. 6d. a hundred: the larger service, of which it forms a part, will be issued presently by Messrs. Rawson, of Manchester. Price, threepence.]

ALWAYS speak the truth, but speak it in a pleasant manner. Truth is like a picture; the manner is the frame that displays it to advantage.

HE who teaches often learns himself.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

Song of the Mill.

Tell me what the mill doth say,
Clitter, clatter, night and day;
When we sleep and when we wake,
Clitter, clatter, it doth make.
Never idle, never still,
What a worker is the mill!
Clitter, clatter, clitter, clatter,
What a worker is the mill.

Tell me also what the rill
Daily warbles down the hill;
Sweet as skylark on the wing,
"Ripple, dipple," it doth sing.
Never idle, never still,
What a worker is the rill!
"Ripple, dipple, ripple, dipple,"
What a worker is the rill.

Listen to the honey bee
As it dances merrily,
To the little fairy's drum,
Humming, drumming, humming, drum,
Never idle, never still,
Humming, drumming, hum it will,
Humming, drumming, humming, drumming,
Humming, drumming, hum it will.

Like the mill, the rill, and bee,
Idleness is not for me.
What says cock-a-doodle-doo?
Up, there's work enough for you!
If I work then, with a will,
It will be but playing still;
Ever cheery, never weary,
It will be but playing still.

EDWARD CAPERN.

The Cuckoo.

The cuckoo is one of those birds that stay with us only so long as the weather is fine. It comes in the pleasant spring-time, when the leaves are beginning to peep from the buds on the trees, and when the flowers are beginning to smile in the green meadows. When we hear the cuckoo's song in the woods, we know that the cold days of winter are over and gone. Let us have a look at that cuckoo, perched on a thick branch of yonder tree. He is a large bird, with coat of bluish-grey on his back, and vest of ashen-grey on his breast. His wings and tail are black, crossed on the outside feathers with bars of white. He hops about from one bough to another, flying only short distances; for, as you will see when he rises, his wings are short and not able to carry him on a very long flight. His tail is long, and very useful in helping him to keep his balance. He has a very pretty long bill, too, with a little curve at the end. With this he snaps up flies and caterpillars on the high trees, and worms and such like soft animals on the ground. With this bill he picks up grain and fruit, crunches the eggs of other birds, and even pecks to death and tries to eat up any stupid little mouse that he may have the good luck to pounce upon. It is pleasant to hear the cuckoo's song at a little distance in the quiet woods. When first heard, the notes are fresh and full and clear; as summer wears through, they are harsher and broken—the voice of the cuckoo has become hoarse. The female sings quite a distinct note from the male; it has been likened to the choking sound of water poured fast out of a narrow-necked bottle. The following rhyme has been made by country folk about the cuckoo:—

"In April, come he will;
In May, he sings all day;
In June, he alters his tune;
In July, he prepares to fly;
In August, go he must."

This is another rhyme, which says much the same thing as the other:—

"In April, cuckoo sings her lay;
In May, she sings both night and day;
In June, she loses her sweet strain;
In July she is off again."

But there is not much singing in the night, though there is a great deal in the long quiet and warm evenings. The female cuckoo does not make a nest of her own to lay her eggs and rear her young ones in. Yet she is not so very heartless as she is sometimes said to be. When she has laid one egg, she places it in her mouth, and, watching the chance of finding some other bird away from home, drops it into the nest among the other bird's eggs. She knows that her egg will be well cared for there. Now, does it not seem strange that those other birds are not wise enough to know that the cuckoo's egg is not their own? They cannot count very well, surely. Besides, they might see that the size or the shape or the colour is not the same as the size or the shape or the colour of their own eggs; might they not? Perhaps they might; but the cuckoo is a clever bird, and those little hedge-warblers and wagtails and blackbirds and finches are not nearly so clever. The cuckoo's egg is very small for the size of the bird; it is just about the same size as the eggs of those little birds, though the cuckoo is three or four times as large as they are. The colour is for the most part mottled reddish grey, but often varies a little from this. The cuckoo is sharp enough to place her eggs in the nests of the little birds whose eggs are likest to her own. But her dodge is not likely to be found out, for the same little bird's are quite content to see a pebble or a marble in their nest, thinking it is just another egg. By and by the egg that the cuckoo dropped into the little bird's nest is hatched, and out comes a young cuckoo. And a terrible fellow a young cuckoo is, when he finds himself in a hedge-sparrow's nest. I will tell you what he does. The young cuckoo grows very fast, and in a few days there is not room enough in the nest for anybody but himself. He soon finds that the eggs and the

other young birds are in his way, so he at once makes up his mind to turn them all out; and, as soon as he is able, he goes to work. He puts his tail under an egg or a young bird, and pushes it against the side of the nest until he gets it upon his back. He then raises himself up the side of the nest as far as he can, and tumbles the egg or young bird over the edge. In this way he goes on till he gets rid of all his fellows in the nest. The young cuckoo is greatly helped in these doings by a hollow in the middle of his back, and by his broad shoulders. By this means the egg or young bird is kept steady on his back, till he be ready to throw it over the edge of the nest. The hollow fills up in about a fortnight. Now, if there should be two young cuckoos hatched in the same nest, what happens? Well, there is just a terrible fight. The strongest pushes the weakest on to his back, hoists him up, and tumbles him over the edge of the nest. There is not room for more than one young cuckoo in a little bird's nest. The young cuckoo is a great glutton, and one pair of hedge-sparrows could not bring him enough to eat. How then, shall he be fed? He cries out, and his cry brings to his help such birds as feed on soft meat, like the littte birds that he has been hatched with. It is a good thing for him that he has a strange, complaining cry, like the cry of those soft-billed birds. These feed him and attend to his wants till he is able to take care of himself; and even after that, as he is flying through the air, the little birds will bring him food, and wait upon him as if he were a prince.

The Ordeal of Doubt.

We grope for the wall like the blind, and we grope as if we had no eyes; we stumble at noon-day as in night.—*Isaiah lix. 10.*

Let him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light lay this precept well to heart, "Do the Duty which lies nearest to thee," which thou knowest to be a Duty! Thy second Duty will already have become clearer.—*Carlyle.*

Is there no corner safe from peeping Doubt?
—*Lowell.*

Father of Lights, pure and unspeakable,
On whom no changing shadow ever fell!
Thy light we know not, are content to see;
And shall we doubt, because we know not Thee?
—*MacDonald.*

In happy toil
Forget this whirl of Doubt! We are weak,—we are weak,
Only when still! Put thou thine hand to the plough!
The spirit drives thee on. —*C. Kingsley.*

He wills, how should he doubt then.
—*Browning.*

'Twixt gleams of joy and clouds of Doubt
Our feelings come and go,
Our best estate is toss'd about
In ceaseless ebb and flow. —*J. C. Shairp.*

By night an atheist half believes a God.
—*Young.*

Thy doubt outspoken may perchance pass on
To purer faith. The fault that saps the life
Is Doubt half-crushed, half-veiled; the lip-assent,
Which finds no echo in the heart of hearts;
The secret Lie which, conscious of its guilt,
Atones for falsehood by intenser seal.
—*Plumptre.*

God's possible is taught by His world's loving,
And the children doubt of each.
—*E. B. Browning.*

News from the Field.

BIRMINGHAM (*Newhall Hill Church*).—On Sunday, May 18th, the 62nd anniversary of the Sunday Schools was celebrated, when the Rev. Chas. Roper, B.A., of Manchester, preached special sermons on behalf of the school funds. Special hymns and anthems were sung by the pupils, conducted by Mr. W. H. Phillips. The congregations were exceedingly good, and the collections realised nearly £30.—The annual meeting was held on Monday, Councillor G. O. C. Holloway presiding. Amongst those present, we noticed the Revs. Chas. Roper, B.A., A. A. Charlesworth, John Harrison, —Tranter, Messrs. J. Styce, W. Unjte, A. J. Buncher, J. Lucas, S. T. Cross, T. F. Derrington, and S. S. Wollaston. The report of the schools was read by Mr. V. W. Clarke, and showed that good progress had been made during the year. £78 17s. 7d. was deposited in the girls' savings club; 28 ordinary prizes and 12 special prizes (provided for the last twenty-five years by the generosity of H. Payton, Esq., J.P.), for perfectly regular attendance, were presented during the year; £74 was deposited in the school savings bank; 75 ordinary and 29 special prizes (for perfectly regular attendance) have been awarded during the year. A concert, organised and carried out by the pupils, realised £7 0s. 11d. for the funds. The school collection for the Children's Hospital realised £23 19s. 2d. (making a total of £295 contributed by this School since the institution of the fund in 1883). For 13 years our School has headed the list in this collection. The Ladies' Benevolent Society has done good work among the sick and the poor. The guild, the junior guild, the school choir, the elocution class, the Dialectical Society and numerous other agencies for good have been working well, and the

schools are in a very prosperous and satisfactory condition. A hearty vote of thanks was passed to the Rev. Charles Roper, B.A., for his eloquent and practical sermons. A selection of music was rendered during the evening by the choir, under the leadership of Mr. Ernest Blakemore.

BANBURY.—On Sunday evening, May the 10th, at the close of the service, the annual congregational meeting was held in the School Room. The Rev. H. Hill occupied the chair. During a brief address, Mr. Hill referred to the general work of the year, which had been done in connection with both chapel and school. Several losses by death had seriously weakened our not by any means too strong a position here at Banbury. Mr. Briscoe (the treasurer) read out his account for the last twelve months, and was able to declare a slight balance on the right side of his books. The Secretary, the two Chapel Wardens, and the Committee were re-appointed to their several positions for another year. A pleasant and encouraging meeting was then brought to a close.

BOLTON (*Bank Street Appointment*).—The vacant pastorate has been offered cordially and unanimously to the Rev. Christopher J. Street, M.A., formerly of Upper Brook Street, Manchester, and at present in charge of the Margate and Ramsgate congregation. We understand that Mr. Street, whose health has been fully restored, has accepted the invitation, and will terminate his engagement in Thanet in June.

EVESHAM —The May meeting of the ancient Ministers' Association was held here on Tuesday, May 19th, when a sermon was preached by the Rev. C. B. Upton, B.A., of Manchester College, Oxford. The congregation afterwards entertained the ministers at dinner, presided over by Dr. Martin. Speeches were delivered by the Chairman, Mr. Geoffrey New, and the Revs. E. Myers, C. B. Upton, E. D. P. Evans, G. E. Evans, Joseph Wood, and Rudolf Davis. A pleasant evening was afterwards spent in Miss Watson's delightful gardens, where tea was served.

LYE.—On Monday evening, April 27th, the members of the congregation of the Unitarian Church, Lye, met in the schoolroom for the purpose of making a presentation to the pastor, the Rev. I. Wrigley. The proceedings were commenced with a tea, and Mr. Jeremiah Pardoe afterwards presided, while among those present were the Revs. E. P. Hall (Netherend) and W. E. Mellone. The Chairman, in the course of a short address, said that Mr. Wrigley had earned the esteem of the members of the church by his work among them. He had done a large amount of work in connection with the erection of a new class-room, the repair of the heating apparatus, the enlargement of the vestry, and other alterations and improvements, which had added much to the comfort of the members and the congregation. The Rev. E. P. Hall made the presentation, which took the shape of a university gown and convocation hood, on behalf of the subscribers. Mr. Wrigley suitably returned thanks. Mr. R. Perry (secretary to the church) and the Rev. W. E. Mellone also addressed the gathering. Mr. Joseph Pardoe presided at the organ.—On Wednesday evening, May 13th, Mr. F. Taylor, of Stourbridge, gave "A Chat about Socialism" to the members of the Mutual Improvement Society. There were more than 30 persons present. A very earnest discussion was followed by a hearty vote of thanks to Mr. Taylor.

SOUTH CHESHIRE AND DISTRICT SUNDAY SCHOOL UNION.—The sixth annual meetings of this association were held at High Street (Shrewsbury) Church on Wednesday, May 13th, and the proceedings proved to be exceedingly instructive and enjoyable. The union includes the Unitarian Schools of Chester, Crewe, Congleton, Nantwich, Shrewsbury, Whitchurch, and Knutsford, and representatives from these different places attended the meetings. The first meeting was held at 3-30, under the presidency of Mr. Vickery, and among those present were the Revs. E. Myers (Shrewsbury), C. Hargrove (Leeds), H. S. Taylor (Dukinfield), G. E. Evans (Whitchurch), J. M. Mills (Nantwich), and R. S. Redfern (Crewe). A very encouraging report was presented, showing that steady and effective progress is being made in the schools of the union, which had been visited by Miss Montgomery, B.A. (Chester), a lady well qualified to judge of the influences and results of the work being done. The Committee spoke with pleasure of the increasing attention to the temperance question in their schools, and expressed the hope that efforts to give sound education on this matter will be extended. The most important clause—from many points of view—in the committee's report was the following:—"Our teachers must be pained to see the strenuous efforts of the sacerdotal party to capture the day schools of the land; for their succeeding to do so means the perpetuation of their own creeds, dogma, and history, to the discredit of all other religious parties. The call comes to us louder than ever to use the short and precious moments of the Sunday for *religious* teaching. The day for secular instruction in the Sunday school has gone by. Every one of our teachers is now called upon to deal faithfully and conscientiously with that aspect of the Christian religion for which we stand while the minds of their scholars are plastic."—The Chairman, in moving the adoption of the report, in the name of the Shrewsbury congregation extended a hearty welcome to the friends who had come there that day, and expressed the hope that the gathering would be as helpful and pleasant to them all as the previous gatherings had been. The Rev. R. S. Redfern seconded the adoption of the report, and the motion was carried.—At the close of the meeting tea was partaken of in the Schoolroom, where the Shrewsbury friends were most assiduous in contributing to the comforts of the visitors. —In the evening an eloquent sermon was preached by the Rev. C. Hargrove, whose text was "Everyone that seeketh findeth." He drew a picture of the first dawning of the religious sentiment, the aspiration for a higher life, the growth of the different religious systems from it, the appearance of Jesus who taught the true way to attain that for which the souls of men were longing, the subsequent wandering from His simple doctrines into dogmatic systems and sectarian bitterness and strife, down to the divisions of Christendom in the present day. He pleaded for a spirit of toleration, and contended that while it was possible that all did not have the same light in the conception of their way to God and the fulfilment of His will, yet they could rest on the rock of the text, and be assured that "everyone that seeketh findeth."